

Western University

Scholarship@Western

Inspiring Minds – Showcasing Western’s Graduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity

September 2021

Phylomemetic Cataloguing

Alex Mayhew

Western University, amayhew@uwo.ca

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/inspiringminds>

Citation of this paper:

Mayhew, Alex, "Phylomemetic Cataloguing" (2021). *Inspiring Minds – Showcasing Western’s Graduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity*. 202.

<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/inspiringminds/202>

When a resource has a better metadata in general it tends to be more valuable, but our theory guides what metadata we record. Current cataloguing theory conceives of texts as instances of essential ‘works.’ However, just as organisms inherit genes from their ancestors, texts actually inherit memes from their antecedents. The transition from Linnæan to Phylogenetic taxonomy in biology suggests an analogous paradigm shift for library cataloguing.

By modelling meme-flow between texts, new forms of bibliographic arrangement and organization become possible. This Phylomemetic Catalogue would allow users to create links between the catalogue records, adding meaningful connections. By collecting these connections library catalogues could include family trees or clades of texts.

This opens the possibility of new types of visualizations and even novel user collaboration in catalogues. A catalogue based on a Phylomemetic paradigm could implement a level of consilience, allowing conflicting perspectives about a text to be productively unified.